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Letter from Anne Whitney, 1869 March 28

Anne Whitney

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March 28th / 69

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My dear home - How I wish I might
tell you just the most interesting
things - ignoring all the rest. The
Roman Season is marked off eccle-
siastically into the 3 great periods -
Easter Week, Passion Week & Easter
& when the last of these seems
a prospect of quiet & forgetfulness
of the all-permeating pontificism. We
went to St. Peter's to see the Pope
attempt to get into the balcony
he is entitled to go because he
is oblige one to go at 10 o'clock in the
morning but started at ten & merged
with the crowd here & there. A rather
thin the immense sides & nave.
Mass was celebrated by the high
altar by the Pope - we could not see
only hear the surge of the chant
& at 11 the silver trumpets the
crystal of all musical sounds blew
from the dome & we formed in with
the crowd to see the procession pass
down the nave. Cardinals, bishops
archbishops, with the Pope borne aloft

on a throne - preceded by dignitaries
bearing the jeweled triple crowns
with some half dozen of wh. he had
worn in the previous ceremony -
Out of the church we go after
the pope & along with the crowd
largely composed of contadini (peasants
people) who make no scruple of
getting on before at anybody's expense.
I arrived in the square wh. you
have seen in a hundred pictures -
solid with human beings. we wait
whole until the pope comes forward
to the front of the balcony in front
of the church & hurls down & about
over the crowd his blessing. I had
heard this ceremony spoken of so
imposing that I was anxious to see
it for once. but tho the crowd was
an inspiring sight - the ceremony
did not impress us much - for the
people did not kneel as we had expected
nor did they become absolutely quiet.
After this we watched for a while
the gorgeously liveried carriages - the
costumes of the various high officials
among wh. we saw one full suit

of armor (it appeared) & one of Eliza-
better style - suff'd all a hundred
who looked as if they had walked
off the stage of a theatre - & then
we made our way home as best we
could - not a heck to be had - & the
rain coming on in little frequent showers.
This eve the church was to have
been illuminated but the rain for-
bids. Mr. & Mrs. Warner & Mrs.
Bushnell (daughter of Dr. B. of
Westford) have been in this very
pleasant people - also Mrs. Packer
& daughter - had the affair come
off we shd. have had quite a company.
March 29 Before breakfast we
proposed to turn over a new leaf - but
tho we shall not fairly achieve
it until the weather changes - the
wonderful persistency of this March
weather is a thing without precedent
in Rome. They say Helen Hunt left
last eve with Mr. & Mrs. H. for
Florence - from there she goes
to Paris & thence to Eng. with the
intention of taking Steamer on June.
She will go out to Belmont & see

you & report the latest news. She
has enjoyed Rome with almost in spite
of her feeble condition & gone about
upborne by the genuine enthusiasm
of an archaeologist - I have not
heard immediately from the Shannons
since they first came to Florence.
Mrs. Drexler says they think of
returning in June - but have had
no word either way from Mr. Shannon
Sat. Apr. 2 - After I had eaten
a competent dinner yesterday, Betty
told me to sit down by the fire
in the parlor & she wd. give me
a second desert. We dine now at
2 o'cl. The second desert proved
to be fr. letter of the 15th full of
good health & comfort - except that
Edwd. & Carrie were about to start off
on that excursion wherein I am
afraid they have been blocked up
with snow storms - I wait the next
news with anxiety - To night at
sunset for the first time since
Feb. there was a look of permanent
fair in the sky - soft floating
rosy clouds & a warmer temperature -

features wh. mark the finer brands - at least
the sisters - not all tho.

As generous as to the wardrobe
Sara has my warm appreciation I am
happy to say there is not the least occasion
for the same. My stock of underclothes
shows no sign of decrease, not one garment
of all I bought seems to be best worn unless
I except 2 nightgowns not new when I left
home & of wh. the collars show some signs of
weariness - besides these I have 3 altogether
blooming & sound - & fresh as yesterday. I
don't know what I shd. do with more clothes.
I must say this for Roman dresswomen -
that they never waste clothes less than
any of those I saw elsewhere - I have had
one or 2 underbikes that were nothing but
a waste of rag & regarded the foundation
of them & they always came home with every
rag gone & ironed out & looking so respectable
I hadn't the heart to throw them away.
till they fell apart by their own weight.
Washing is also very cheap here - so much
for each thing 1/2 k. 1 cent each - hose 1-
waist - 1/2 Chemise & drawers 4 each & iron
Monday 4 ct The price of butter has fallen
& soon we are throwing out a little - but
enough remain & will till after the 12th
The album - & other & various are for sale
I don't want to take the time for photo-
graphing until I have finished my present

clay - wh. approaches completion - & wh
I shall be able to show in a few days.
The subject is a very old beggaress.

H. H. as we is organizing a St. Pauli-chess
An English woman said to me yesterday -
"Miss H. is as wise as a fox. The City is full
of our country-people - & everybody is on the
quixote to see ^{such a} little woman perform
such a feat. by this means she gets her
name into the papers - & it is done ostensibly
to help the family of the huntsman who has
given them so much pleasure this winter - &
all redounds to her benefit". I think there
is one mistake in the statement viz. that
she has any profound motive for self-ag-
grandizement. - It is natural to her to do
notorious things - & she loves rising. Some
few weeks ago she had a break with Miss
Cashmer for making up with the Ital. hump
party & going back - At the time she came
in & told us the whole story of it - I don't
know if they are reconciled - haven't asked
but there was plenty of bitterness. (private)
I know you read my letters sometimes to the
Robbins) Thus I don't know if it
does herself harm or good by this means
very likely not much of either (as her business
success is assured either way) people
must live their lives their own way -
& any personal distaste that might be
engendered by things not altogether of

of according to prescription is released
in the main by the respectful conviction
that here is an individual at least added
to the world's stock not that every gen-
uine life does not give the same sense
whether it comes with blather or not.

When the other day I sent H. Hunt
brought up her whole stock of letters I
asked her if she always did so. She
said yes ever since the Portland
fire for at that time the pro-
domestic scandal that got abroad
these letters picked up & read by the
public was a caution against all such
utterances of one's correspondence. I must
say it seems to me only an act of common
sense to do so. I wd. willingly sac-
rifice every letter I have now to be sure
that none had gone to Hong in an auto-
da fe. Letters that have no public sig-
nificance are but passing things like the
words of the mouth & very soon are
worthless for reference & the convenience of
them for such occasions is over weighed
by the danger of mixing up personal relations
with persons that within no term is met
even when a not over severe thing is said
of them. On top of such a general pile I
shd. like to put all the sentimental rubbish within

on the subject of old letters.

Yeshode. I saw
Mr. G. J. Biglow in the St. (who was here)
looking stout & heavy & like a man on the
downward slope. I thought he was a juvenile
"party" to use Charles C's & Sharp term.
Nobody looks of much acct. after he
gets into Rome. I left the friends who
take brief home messages in their
faces & they loom up.

Davis it is said has disappeared. I got
into a convent the Papals say. Davis
is one of the Pope's choir a young
man child of nobody knows who, who
was left here by his parents in infancy.
He was brought up therefore by the
church & having a fine voice was of
great use to it. He is said however
to be anti-papal in tendency & some
weeks since visited a certain Catholic
lady here (anti-pope) over whom Gov.
keeps a strict surveillance. He was
heard to say when expostulated with on the
subject that they couldn't do without him
at Easter & after that he meant to be off
to America. I have seen him several times
in company - where his handsome face & clear
voice make quite an object to look at. The

only person that ever runs in company
with those not over admired persons
on. I saw that always when he goes into
society someone accompanies him as spy
well - he has passed off the stage for
the present at least. Miss Raincock
(from last camp) says that when the
children of the Church - Christy & the
rest get into difficulty - there is no
help for them. They are absolute in the
power of the ecclesiastical & bazaar reech
of any civil tribunal. but as it is in-
vulnerable I shd. say with all other subjects
Passaglia, is a Roman subject who had
some office very near the Pope on his first
coming into the chair. He & the Pope were
in sympathy on the beginning when as for
remember the latter was a reformer. When
the Pope changed - Passaglia remained
the same & by degrees came to be hated &
feared with the persons that men.
The reform people of the Church have
few those who are of them & not of them.
Mrs. Sulzger (the Exp. Cath. lady above)
whose confessor he was - lodged him in
his palace & knowing that his liberty was
in jeopardy secretly procured a prison party
wh. she kept by her. One day Passaglia
was sitting with her when she was notified
that the Sers d'arms were coming. he was
suddenly hustled into an inner room & when

the police appeared - She warned them
that they advanced into her house at
their peril for that she was an Esp.
subject - & they were violating the Law of
nations - They said they came to take
her and send her to know nothing of that
business - but they must leave her house -
They waved & turned about - the Chief
not being with them & immediately the
sergeant was made head & P^o in the
dress of her footman drove off on the
box to the frontier - He is now in Turin
& very active in the service of Liberty &
against the Papacy.

Charles has been spending
the last hour in chat & I must turn
up my letter for the mail - He has been
promising to send some of the boys in - but
it doesn't come easy - They are a little
shy he says, & then he says - he walks
boy - sleeps boy & drives on boy & sometimes
it is too much for him - Among all the
impressant things that one must say or think
of Chas. this ought to be said in his favor -
he always leaves one with the impression
that he is thoroughly honest in his much
speech - Weather fine again - Good friends!
Best love of Ady - & assurance of continued
good health - with all blessings on you all -